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The Political Potential of Popular Culture in Turkey: The Reading of Three TV Series: *Leyla ile Mecnun*, *Ben de Özledim* and *Beş Kardeş*

Demet Lüküslü

- 1 In his influential works on popular culture, John Fiske underlines the “political potential” of popular culture. He argues that popular culture “is always, at its heart, political. It is produced and enjoyed under conditions of social subordination and is centrally implicated in the play of power in society¹.” Inspired by Fiske’s argument, this paper focuses on the reading of three Turkish television series, *Leyla ile Mecnun* [*Leyla and Mecnun*], *Ben de Özledim* [*I Missed You Too*], and *Beş Kardeş* [*Five Brothers*], and discusses their political potential.
- 2 These three TV series, directed by the same director, Onur Ünlü², and featuring the same main group of actors, can also be read as “one” TV series instead of three totally different ones. The journey started with the airing of *Leyla ile Mecnun*, an absurd comedy, in February 2011, on the public channel TRT1. The show soon became a cult series among the young and succeeded in creating its own jargon and was soon immersed into the youth culture. The series was supposed to continue for a fourth season but was unexpectedly ended right after the Gezi Park protests in 2013³. I have argued elsewhere that “in fact, this immersion of the series into the youth culture that turned it into one of the important components of the Gezi Park protests in June 2013[...] brought about the decision of the public channel to not continue the series⁴.”
- 3 After the finale of *Leyla ile Mecnun*, the same team produced another TV series, *Ben de Özledim*, for Star TV (2013-2014), a private rather than public channel. The series started airing in October 2013 and chronicled the lives of the production crew (including producers, the director and the actors) after the cancellation of the series *Leyla ile Mecnun*. They all meet together and continue to live different adventures while missing the *Leyla ile Mecnun* days – hence the title, *I Missed You Too*. In light of its low ratings, the TV series

was cancelled after 13 episodes (the last one being aired on 29 January 2014) and thus became a victim of the ratings system.

- 4 The third TV series *Beş Kardeş* (Kanal D, 2015), again with the same director and nearly the same acting crew (with the exception of Ali Atay, who played the male lead, Mecnun, in *Leyla ile Mecnun*, and the inclusion of some important actors in the cast such as Tansu Biçer and Nadir Sarıbacak), started the journey on 16 February 2015 on a private channel, Kanal D. The series was interrupted after five episodes due to low ratings, with the promise of returning in the summer. The series resumed but was once again forced to end due to low ratings after the thirteenth episode on 4 August 2015.
- 5 Thus, it is possible to underline that *Leyla ile Mecnun* would probably have had the same short life if it had started its journey on a private channel, which generally gives higher priority to TV ratings, because the series, even though it would emerge as a cult series of the youth culture, never achieved popularity among a general audience. *Leyla ile Mecnun* was one of the TV series that was popular on the social media but less so according to the ratings. Ali Eyüboğlu, a TV commentator for the *Milliyet* newspaper, confessed after the ending of the first season, that he never made it through an entire episode, since he did not laugh at absurd comedies. However, he underlined that although the series did not have high ratings, it became a trendy topic after each episode on Twitter. Whenever an online survey was conducted on TV series, *Leyla ile Mecnun* always had good scores, whereas in the ratings, the series always situated in the middle or towards the bottom of the ratings list. For example, the final episode of the first season had a rating of 0.92 and was 78th overall, and 48th in the AB group (representing educated and high-income earners) with a rating of 1.38⁵.
- 6 In this article, it will be argued that these three TV series, having indeed close links with each other, create a close contact with the viewers making it possible to observe the interrelationship between the text, the producer and the audience. Secondly, this article will discuss how these TV series resist the dominant systems (both the political system and that of the ratings of the TV world) and demonstrate the potential of TV series to become a force of opposition.

TV series “winking” at its viewers

- 7 There had been a tradition in the TV sector in Turkey to see the audience as “ignorant” and “passive”. Producers tended to believe that they knew what the audience wanted and it was important to keep the text as simple as possible. A similar debate also exists in television studies among scholars. On the one hand, there is the passive audience approach according to which “the text is seen as monolithic, containing a well-marked preferred meaning making it difficult for alternative meanings to emerge⁶.” According to the Marxist view of the role of television, “in watching television, people are persuaded to accept a view of society, and of their place in it, that confirms their subordination.” On the other hand, there is “an active audience” approach which “sees the text not as monolithic, with a strong preferred meaning, but rather as polysemic, containing a number of possible meanings and therefore allowing a range of audience interpretations⁷.” That is why the audience is not passive but active in discussing and analysing the text⁸.
- 8 The three TV series that this article focuses on however claim to address themselves to an “intelligent” and active audience, viewers who are able to understand complicated jokes

as well as the references made in the text. Onur Ünlü, the director, said in an interview in 2015 that when he directs movies, he has a fictitious audience in mind. It is an audience of viewers who are cleverer and more intellectual than Ünlü himself; a viewer who is not easy to please. Ünlü said that he produces films for this type of viewer⁹. It is possible to say he produces TV series with the same audience in mind. The texts of the TV series accordingly are difficult to grasp and full of references that aim to create a dialogue with the viewers.

- 9 The title *Leyla ile Mecnun* refers to an ancient Arabian love story, Layla and Mejnun. The series is in fact an absurd comedy and the script writer, Burak Aksak, explains in an interview¹⁰ that the question that led him to the idea of such a comedy was: What would it be like if a white-bearded old man (*ak sakallı dede*) as in fairy tales helped Mecnun in his love affair? In that sense, the series is Mecnun's story and demonstrates male bonding between Mecnun, Mecnun's father Iskender, Mecnun's friend Yavuz, his brother Ismail and the neighborhood grocer, Erdal. The series in fact created a special jargon and expected that viewers learn and understand it. As I argued in a previous work¹¹, since *Leyla ile Mecnun* was produced for the public channel, TRT1, the producers of the series had to face the censorship of the channel as well as that of the state agency responsible for monitoring, regulating, and sanctioning radio and TV broadcasts in Turkey, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK). Interestingly, the series invented some creative "tactics"¹² to overcome these difficulties and constraints and created a special jargon in the series in order to refer to banned material such as alcohol, cigarettes, or swearing and cursing.
- 10 For example, in *Leyla ile Mecnun* vocabulary: chewing gum represents cigarettes; grapes represent wine; to fall into grapes means to drink wine (to fall into wine); figs (*incir*) represent *rakı*¹³; fruit juice (canned fruit juice wrapped in paper) represents beer (beer wrapped in paper); plums represent tequila, etc. Similarly, since there is censorship on Turkish television as to the use of slang, the TV series chose to create new ways of swearing from the mouths of the characters to overcome this censorship. For instance, shower curtain, bathroom slippers, plastic bags, and holes in socks were all used as swear words. *Duş perdesi* (shower curtain) was used as a swear word and in the series, it was defined as "disgusting, since it sticks on your back while having a shower; you try to get rid of it and then it becomes even more tangled." *Tuvalet terliği* (bathroom slippers) were defined as "yellow plastic low quality slippers, like ugly and dirty bathroom slippers". *Poşet* (plastic bags) was also used as a swear word, as a "black, low-quality plastic bag, which is smelly and cancer producing." Similarly, *delik çorap* (a hole in a sock) "the hole in your sock that you see after taking off your shoes (especially if you are in someone else's house)" was used as a swear word. The jargon created by *Leyla ile Mecnun* thus became popular in the youth culture.
- 11 The two following series often referred to *Leyla ile Mecnun*, and both presumed that the viewers were familiar with it and that they would not miss these references. The departure point for *Ben de Özledim* was in fact the idea of what happened in the lives of the actors and the production team once *Leyla ile Mecnun* was over. It is also in *Ben de Özledim* that the viewers learned about how *Leyla ile Mecnun* would end. Burak Aksak, the script writer, announced in the series that in the final episode of *Leyla ile Mecnun*, if the series had continued, the spectators would have learned that everything was, in fact, in Mecnun's imagination. Mecnun had an accident and was paralyzed, and the characters were all in his imagination. Once again, the producers of the series chose to transcend the

constraints by not rejecting the rules, but by playing within the system and by “winking” at the audience: *Leyla ile Mecnun* had its final episode in another series.

- 12 *Beş Kardeş* in fact started as a separate and different story from *Leyla ile Mecnun*. It focused on the story of five brothers in their thirties, all single, living in one of the rare mansions (*konak*) in Istanbul. The first names of the five brothers are all the first names of five important writers in Turkey: Sait (as in Sait Faik Abasıyanık¹⁴), Turgut (as in Turgut Uyar¹⁵), Nazım (as in Nazım Hikmet¹⁶), Orhan as in (Orhan Veli¹⁷) and Aziz (as in Aziz Nesin¹⁸). Since the series took place in a *mahalle* (neighborhood), it was also possible to detect a reference to some other important programs in Turkish television history since the *mahalle* had been the place for other successful series such as *Perihan Aba* ([*Sister Perihan*], TRT, 1986-1988), *Süper Baba* ([*Super Dad*], TRT, 1993-1997), *Bizimkiler* [*Ours, Our People*], TRT1 1989-1994, Star TV 1994-1999, Show TV 1999-2002), etc¹⁹. The last episode of the series ended tragically with the death of the five brothers in a car crash and the music played in this tragic scene was the music of *Leyla ile Mecnun*.
- 13 Concerning the political potential of these series, in all three, there were references to political events as well. In fact, departing from the existent tradition of seeing the audience as passive and less intelligent than the producers, the latter were confident that the viewers would catch these references and play an active role in interpreting them. Nicholas Abercrombie argues that “any full analysis of the relationship of television and society must pay attention to three aspects of text, producer and audience²⁰”, and invites scholars to look in detail at these three aspects in turn. The three series discussed in this article enable one to rethink TV studies literature, which tends to focus on the text, producers and the audience as distinct fields. These three TV series demonstrate how these three can be merged into one. As Abercrombie notes, “[m]ost of the larger questions concerning the social role of television can, in fact, only be satisfactorily tackled by considering the interrelationship of text, producer and audience²¹.”
- 14 My previous research showed that popular culture occupies an important place on websites and in comments on the social media by young people²². Intertextuality and the active use of humour are equally important. Moreover, TV series like *Leyla ile Mecnun*, *Ben de Özledim* and *Beş Kardeş* feed the youth culture. Hence, the series jargon is actively used in everyday conversations and references to the series can be found everywhere on the social media.

TV series with political potential

- 15 As already noted, in his studies on popular culture John Fiske argues the political potential of popular culture. He criticizes radical theorists for underestimating popular forces. According to Fiske, “we can learn at least as much, if not more, about resistances to the dominant ideology from studying popular everyday tactics as from theorizing and analyzing the strategic mechanisms of power²³.” Similarly, there is an “underestimation of the amount of social change or progress that popular forces have achieved within and against the system that dominates their social experience²⁴.” The three Turkish TV series in question illustrate well resistance to the dominant ideology and popular everyday tactics. It is important to note that the Turkish television sector since the 2000s has experienced an important turning point “in which new regulations, rapid market growth, and political pressures interact with and transform each other²⁵.”

- 16 Even though *Leyla ile Mecnun* was aired on a public channel and was exposed to some censorship, the text did not refrain from making references to political debates and criticizing the political system. Interestingly, it was not punished by the state channel until the Gezi Park protests. For example, after the scandalous news about the Minister of the Interior, İdris Naim Şahin, who demanded that one of the citizens welcoming him on his visit to the town of Pasinler do a somersault as a sign of happiness at seeing him, there was a scene in *Leyla ile Mecnun* (S02, E57) criticizing that incident. Brother Ismail, who constantly searches for jobs but is unable to find one suitable for him, goes to a restaurant for a job interview. The restaurant owner asks questions of prospective workers and asks the man he decided to hire to demonstrate his happiness at finding a job. He said: “Do you want this job so much? How can I know that you want it so much? Stand up and start belly dancing or do a somersault so that I can understand that.” Brother Ismail is furious to hear this and responds: “What are you saying? A somersault! This man wants a job, he is not begging²⁶!” However, it was especially with the support of the production team for the Gezi Park protests and also the utilization of the *Leyla ile Mecnun* jargon in the protests (demonstrating once again the links between the text, the producers and the audience) and the cancellation of the series that *Leyla ile Mecnun* had become a symbol of the Gezi Park protests and of political opposition²⁷. In a similar manner, the existent nostalgia for *Leyla ile Mecnun* also demonstrates a criticism of the cancellation of the series. One also has to note that not only the public channel cancelled the show but also the other private channels were unwilling to air the series as well for rating reasons. In fact, ratings would be the reason for ending *Ben de Özledim* as well as *Beş Kardeş*. This also directs the opposition of the program against the rating-base decisions of the TV sector in Turkey.
- 17 *Beş Kardeş* is full of “critical” and “oppositional” references as well. To understand this oppositional potential of popular culture, it is important to cite - at least briefly - some examples. Interestingly, the following quotes from the series were turned into captions and shared on the social media, which again shows the interrelationship between the text, the producer and the audience. For instance, it is possible to recognize some references to the corruption charges against the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*). These criticisms were especially evident in episode 8 of the series in which the five brothers try to identify the thief who stole their mother’s ring:
- NAZIM. No there is no excuse for theft.
 ORHAN. Brother, do you realize in which country we are living?
 NAZIM. You are right. In this country, one can always find an excuse for theft.
- 18 Here, the series was making an important reference and criticism of the excuses offered to justify political corruption. The following lines also provided a similar criticism about the situation in Turkey:
- ORHAN. Where do you think he is going?
 NAZIM. How do I know? If he stole the ring, he is going to the jewelry store. Look at us! What have they done to the country! We are even suspecting our brother of being a thief.
- 19 There were also criticisms in the last episode of the new presidential complex of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which has been called a “palace” by the opposition and criticized for its luxurious features. In the last episode, Orhan was saying that he bought one glass for 1000 liras, which is *à la mode* in palaces. Whereas the remark of the other brothers underlines

the nonsense in talking about palaces in the 21st century: “We are living in the twenty-first century and you are still talking about palaces.”

- 20 Apart from these concrete references to the debates in the political culture of Turkey, it is also possible to detect criticisms about the “other” television series with high ratings (which can also be read as a criticism of the ratings-based TV system in Turkey). In an episode (*Bes Kardeş*, E10) in which the five brothers suspect that they have a half-sister and start searching for her, the brothers start wondering whether that sister might be Canan, the fiancé of Sait, the older brother. Nazım’s answer is that this is not very probable, but if that were the case, their television series would have a better rating:

SAIT. If [...] our sister [...] is Canan?

NAZIM. Can such a thing happen? What is this? As if this were a television series.

SAIT. She is not our sister, right?

NAZIM. No brother, it is not possible. If it were the case, it would have been watched much more.

- 21 The examples from the TV series in fact demonstrate the pleasure in resisting power. John Fiske underlines the pleasure for the subordinate and that “the subordinate may be disempowered, but they are not powerless”:

Pleasure for the subordinate is produced by the assertion of one’s social identity in resistance to, in independence of, or in negotiation with, the structure of domination. There is no pleasure in being a “cultural dope”: there is, however, real pleasure to be found in, for example, soap operas that assert the legitimacy of feminine meanings and identities within and against patriarchy. Pleasure results from the production of meanings of the world and of self that are felt to serve the interests of the reader rather than those of the dominant. The subordinate may be disempowered, but they are not powerless. There is a power in resisting power, there is a power in maintaining one’s social identity in opposition to that proposed by the dominant ideology, there is a power in asserting one’s own subcultural values against the dominant ones²⁸.

Conclusion

- 22 The hashtag opened for the last episode of *Beş Kardeş* was *#Güzelİnsanlar* (*#BeautifulPeople*). This finale started happily with the older brother, Sait’s marriage ceremony to Canan, and their departure on their honeymoon. Once Sait departs, the story starts to turn “tragic” while the four brothers are gradually “tricked” and “robbed” subsequently losing their brother’s fish shop, his prized red delivery truck, and finally their house. Escaping a confrontation with the older brother, they flee to their father’s village. On his return from his honeymoon, Sait learns about what happened and goes to take back his red truck and then heads to the village to find his brothers. He finds them and they begin all to travel back to Istanbul. When Sait was just about to tell his brothers that he knows a way to recapture what they lost, the viewers begin to hear the melancholic music of *Leyla ile Mecnun* and see the vehicle fall off of a cliff and explode. There are many comments under the hashtag beautiful people all demonstrating shock over the ending of the series. The leading actor, Serkan Keskin, shares from his official twitter account the following phrase on 5 August 2015 (retweeted by 4.7K and declared favorite by 9K), the day of the last episode of the series: “*Ohh yine kaybettik. Emeği geçen ve yanımızda olan herkese çok teşekkür ederim.* (Ohh ([a sigh of relief] we lost again. I would like to thank all those who participated and were with us). These words resume the loss of all these “beautiful people” but also seem to refer to the cruelty of the existing system and

the difficulty of “victory”. In other words, it is a relief not to be one of the “winners” of the system.

- 23 The television story, which started with *Leyla ile Mecnun* and ended tragically in the third TV series, *Beş Kardeş*, with the music played in this last scene also underlined the continuity between the series. After this tragic end (of the beautiful people), the question to be asked is: Does this tragic ending also symbolize the end of the journey of the television series that began with *Leyla ile Mecnun*? Does it also symbolize the impossibility of producing a TV series in this atmosphere of censorship and rating wars? The viewers will have to wait and see.
- 24 To be continued...

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NOTES

1. John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1991, p.159.
2. For a detailed interview with the director see Alper Kırklar, *Onur Ünlü: Bir Sürü Endişe*, İstanbul, Sel Yayıncılık, 2017.
3. It is important to note that *Leyla ile Mecnun* is not the only exception. Among others, special attention should be given to *Behzat Ç.*, another Turkish TV series of political character. *Behzat Ç.* is a Turkish police series adopted for TV from Emrah Serbes's books about police officer *Behzat Ç.* According to Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver's classification (a classification given in "Turkish TV Series 'Diziler': Production, Representations and Reception in the Mediterranean" Conference in Paris on 17-18 October 2014), the series is an example of a new genre in Turkish TV: series *noirs*. Emrah Serbes, the writer of the *Behzat Ç.* character, states in an interview on 18 June 2013 that if *Behzat Ç.* were a policeman in Taksim during the Gezi Park protests, he would give up his badge and gun and join the protestors. The actors of the series also showed their support for the Gezi Park protests (see "*Behzat Ç. Rozetini bırakıp Gezi Parkı'na giderdi*", *Tribun dergi*, 18 June 2013, <http://www.tribundergi.com/haber/behzat-c-rozetini-birakip-gezi-parki-na-giderdi>). The actors of the series showed their support for the Gezi Park protests as well (see "*Behzat Ç'den 'Gezi' Açıklaması*", *Cumhuriyet*, 7 June 2013, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/426370/Behzat_C_den_Gezi_aciklamasi.html).
4. Demet Lüküslü, "Overcoming Censorship with Creative Tactics: The TV Series *Leyla ile Mecnun* as a Cult Series of the Youth Culture in Turkey", *French Journal for Media Research*, no.4, 2015, p. 2.
5. Ali Eyüboğlu, "*Leyla ile Mecnun ve Absürt bir Durum!*", *Milliyet Cadde*, 28 June 2012, <http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2012/06/28/YazarDetay/1559736/leyla-ile-mecnun-ve-absurt-bir-durum->
6. Nicholas Abercrombie, *Television and Society*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996, p. 200.
7. *ibid.*, p. 200-201.
8. According to Nicholas Abercrombie, this debate is quite artificial: "To a very great extent the debate over the active audience is rather artificial. No one will argue for the absolute autonomy of the audience from the text and no one will argue for the absolute power of the text over the audience. Rather the debate is properly about the balance of text, audience and social context, and that is entirely a matter of empirical investigation. Within this debate the essential question concerns the mechanisms by which members of the audience turn a television programme into something recognizable by them - and some of these have been described in this chapter." *Television and Society*, Cambridge, Polity Press. 1996, p. 204.
9. Eray Özer, "*Onur Ünlü: Tembel Gösterip Aşırı Çalışkanlıktan Vuruyor*", *Cumhuriyet Sokak*, 21 June 2015, p.15.
10. See Lora Baytar, "*Leyla ile Mecnun'un Macerası*", *Agos*, 17 June 2012, <http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/1699/leyla-ile-mecnunun-macerasi>
11. Lüküslü, 2015.
12. Michel de Certeau distinguishes between "tactic" and "strategy". He defines tactic as the "art of the weak", whereas strategy is the "art of the powerful". According to de Certeau, tactics emerge in a space controlled by the enemy: "It [the tactic] does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy and viewing the adversary as a whole within a district, visible, and objectifiable space. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow [...] This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a

guileful ruse". See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall (Trans.), Berkeley, CA, London, University of California Press, 1988, p. 37).

13. Rakı is a national alcoholic drink made up of twice-distilled grapes and aniseed, tasting very similar to Greek Ouzo.

14. Sait Faik Abasıyanık (1906-1954) is considered as one of the greatest writers of short stories and poetry in Turkish literature. An important theme in his works was the sea.

15. Turgut Uyar (1927-1985), an important poet in Turkish literature, is especially known for using imagery and complicated figures of speech in his poetry. He was part of an avant-garde movement of the 1950s known as *İkinci Yeni* (Second New) as an opposition to the simple use of language in the preceding movement of *Birinci Yeni* (First New).

16. Nazım Hikmet (1902-1963) is considered as one of the greatest literary figures of modern Turkish literature. He was a poet, playwright and novelist and also a Communist who spent considerable time in jail and died in exile.

17. Orhan Veli (1914-1950) was one of the founders (together with Oktay Rıfat and Melih Cevdet Anday) of the Garip Movement known also as the First New in Turkish poetry. The movement was a very important influence in the second half of the 1940s.

18. Aziz Nesin (1915-1995) is one of the most important figures of Turkish literature who published novels, short stories, poems and plays.

19. Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, "Türk Televizyon Dizilerinde Aile Mahalle ve Cemaat Yaşamı", *İstanbul Dergisi*, no. 40, 2002, p. 93-96.

20. Abercrombie, p.205.

21. *ibid.*, p.205.

22. Demet Lüküslü, "Cyberspace in Turkey: A 'Youthful' Space for Expressing Powerful Discontent and Suffering" in *Wired Citizenship: Youth Learning and Activism in the Middle East*, ed. Linda Herrera and Rehab Sakr, New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 81-86 [p. 76-88].

23. Fiske, p. 187.

24. *ibid.*, p. 187.

25. Kumru Berfin Emre Çetin, "The 'Politicization' of Turkish Television Dramas", *International Journal of Communication*, no. 8, 2014, p. 2463.

26. For details see, "TRT, Bakan şahin'e 'takla' göndermesine ses çıkarmadı", T24, May 2012, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/trt-bakan-sahine-takla-gondermesi-yapan-ismail-abiye-ses-cikarmadi,203448>

27. It is in fact possible to see a certain continuity between these three television series and the movie directed by Onur Ünlü, *İtirazım Var* [the name of the movie was translated into English as *Let's Sin*, but a word for word translation would be *I have an objection*]. Ünlü, in a talk during a special screening of the movie on 29 April 2014 in İstanbul, said that if the series had not ended suddenly, he would have waited for some years to make the movie. *İtirazım Var* was a movie about an « imam » who took on the role of a detective after the killing of a man in his mosque. The imam, who was played by Serkan Keskin, who portrayed the character İsmail Ağbi in *L&M*, was a critical imam and it was through him that the new Islamic bourgeoisie was being criticised. The reporters asked Onur Ünlü whether the source of inspiration for the movie was the imam who opened the doors of his mosque in Dolmabahçe during the Gezi Park protests to the victims of police brutality. Onur Ünlü answered that the idea of the movie had a long history dating back to before the Gezi Park protests; however, he was sure that "The imam in the movie too would open the doors of his mosque to these young people" (see Mushin Topyıldız, "Bizim imamımız da o çocukları içeri alırdı," *Radikal*, 27 February 2014).

28. John Fiske, *Television Culture*, London, New York, Routledge, 1997 (first published in 1987 by Methuen & Co. Ltd), p. 19.

ABSTRACTS

Inspired by Fiske's argument about the political potential of popular culture, this article reads three Turkish television series *Leyla ile Mecnun* [*Leyla and Mecnun*], *Ben de Özledim* [*I Missed You Too*], and *Beş Kardeş* [*Five Brothers*] and discusses their political potential. These three TV series, directed by the same director and featuring the same main cast, can also be read as "one" TV series instead of three totally different ones. It is argued here that these three TV series have close links with each other and created a close contact with the viewers. This is a series that sends a "wink" to the viewers, making it possible to observe the interrelationship between the text, the producer and the audience. Secondly, this article discusses how these TV series resist the dominant systems (both the political system and that of the ratings of the TV world) and demonstrate the potential of TV series to become a force of opposition.

Cet article s'inspire du concept de potentiel politique de la culture populaire, qui a été développé par Fiske. Il discute le potentiel politique de trois séries télévisées, *Leyla ile mecnun* [*Leïla et le fou*], *Ben de Özledim* [*Toi aussi tu me manques*], et *Beş Kardeş* [*Cinq Frères*]. Ces trois séries du même réalisateur, qui ont le même casting pour les rôles principaux, peuvent aussi être lues comme trois versions totalement différentes d'une même série. Cet article montre que ces trois séries ont de nombreux liens entre elles et avec les téléspectateurs. Ce sont des séries qui jouent sur la complicité avec les téléspectateurs, ce qui nous permet d'observer les relations entre le texte, le producteur et l'audience. Plus largement, cet article se penche sur la question de savoir comment ces séries résistent au système dominant (à la fois le système politique et les ratings), et démontre le potentiel des séries pour devenir une force d'opposition.

INDEX

Keywords: TV series, popular culture, political opposition, Turkey, sociology of education, social movements, cultural studies, Internet studies, Ünlü Onur

Mots-clés: séries télévisées, culture populaire, opposition politique, Turquie, sociologie de l'éducation, mouvements sociaux, culture studies, études internet, Ünlü Onur

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